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DPSS EXECUTIVE TEAM

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Acting Chief Deputy

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Shirley Christensen
Special Assistant

Acting Director's Message



Sheryl L. Spiller

I am pleased to announce that the Board of Supervisors has proclaimed May 2012 as "CalFresh Awareness Month" throughout Los Angeles County.

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), California Department of Social Services and more than 30 community partners in a concerted effort to educate Los Angeles County residents and reach those most vulnerable to hunger.

There are over one million residents currently receiving CalFresh food benefits; however, there are many eligible families and individuals in the County who are unaware that they are eligible for CalFresh benefits. Increasing access to nutritious food through participation in the CalFresh Program continues to be a high priority for DPSS.

Part of our community outreach campaign includes promoting "Your Benefits Now" (YBN) and deploying the DPSS Health and Nutrition Mobile Office to farmer's markets and other non-traditional locations throughout the County.

I am optimistic that this campaign will shine a spotlight on the critical role CalFresh plays in increasing household food budgets and allowing families to put nutritious food on their tables.

Thank you for your continued hard work and commitment. As always, let's not forget that one of our primary goals should be staying healthy.

Sheryl L. Spiller

Philip Browning Bids Farewell to DPSS

Philip L. Browning, who led DPSS for four years and is credited with implementing a number of innovative programs in the department, is now settling into his new position as Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

On February 16, Browning was officially appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to help DCFS with its mission to collaborate with public, private and community partners, in order to provide quality child welfare services.

Looking back at the accomplishments under his leadership, Browning credited everyone at DPSS for the Board of Supervisors' confidence in him to lead the 7,300-plus employees at the child welfare agency.

"Speaking of DPSS," Browning said when thanking DPSS staff for stepping up in his absence, "the list of accomplishments which you can take credit for is too long to list ... You should be very proud. I am so pleased that many more initiatives have been accomplished under the direction of Acting Director Sheryl L. Spiller and Acting Chief Deputy Phil Ansell."

"CalFresh Awareness Month" to Also Focus on Healthy Food Choices

Got Food?



The CalFresh Awareness Month campaign is not only meant to increase public awareness about the benefits of CalFresh, but to educate the community at large about making healthier food choices.

According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report on food insecurity, the number of U.S. homes lacking adequate food more than tripled in the last four years. In Los Angeles County (home to 10.4 million residents) it's estimated that only half of those eligible are receiving CalFresh – the supplemental nutrition food benefit previously called Food Stamps.

CalFresh continued on page 2

CalFresh Continued

Studies show that communities lacking access to healthy and affordable food choices are at greater risks for obesity, diabetes and certain types of cancer. According to the L.A. County Department of Public Health, lower-income communities are especially vulnerable due to added risk factors associated with limited resources and less opportunities for physical activity.

A visit in February by First Lady Michelle Obama to the future site of CalFresh Awareness Month business partner, Northgate Gonzalez Markets, helped promote the campaign message of creating access to healthy foods and encouraging residents to exercise more.

Recognized nationally, the CalFresh Awareness Month campaign has been described as one of the most coordinated efforts to increase access to food assistance and reduce hunger in Los Angeles County.

For additional information on applying for CalFresh benefits, visit www.dpss.lacounty.gov/dpss/calfresh or call the Department's Health and Nutrition Hotline at **1 (877) 597-4777**.

Sheryl L. Spiller Honored With Community-at-Large Award

On March 12, 2012, the Los Angeles County Commission for Women and the Board of Supervisors honored Sheryl L. Spiller as one of its prestigious Community-at-Large Award recipients in the Business/Labor category at the 27th Annual Women of the Year Awards Luncheon.

The honor coincided with events held throughout the world to celebrate International Women's Day, where the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present and future are observed annually.

Spiller was one of 13 local women recognized by the Commission for their work towards improving the quality of life for women in the County. Prior to assuming the role of Acting DPSS Director in August 2011, Spiller built her career with a combination of front-line work, strategic savvy and a commitment to helping others develop their strengths and grow on the job.



Sheryl L. Spiller accepts Community-at-Large on Business/Labor award from Norma Gallegos at the Los Angeles County Commission for Women's Awards Ceremony



First Lady Visits Key CalFresh Awareness Month Partner Northgate Markets

DPSS Implementation of "d.school" Approach Helping to Improve Program Delivery

Yes, you read that correctly! d.school, read as "d' school," is a term that has been heard in DPSS since July 2011 and has led to four projects and a few other department activities.

What is d.school?

d.school is a method developed by Stanford University, which encourages staff to think differently about challenges faced by DPSS and to find creative solutions to resolving them. d.school provides a process that allows the department to better understand the needs of those it helps, including DPSS staff and managers and community partners. The projects which have gone through the d.school process to date have allowed the Department to better understand the needs of participants, staff, managers, and community partners.

How is DPSS using d.school?

DPSS has used d.school to create or look for ways of improving our department's programs and processes, based on feedback from those who are impacted by the operations.

To date, the d.school process has helped the department understand and take steps to resolve why participants often submit late or incomplete QR-7 reports, redesign the Transitional Subsidized Employment program to appeal to more employers, redesign the GROW Job Club to better prepare participants for employment, and assisted in designing an effective "Your Benefits Now" (YBN) campaign to promote its use. Stay tuned for more projects involving this d.school approach!

LA COUNTY STARS!!!

DPSS Payment Verification System Project Honored

The DPSS Payment Verification System (PVS) Project Team was recently honored by the Board of Supervisors as L.A. COUNTY STARS in the category of Service Excellence and Organizational Effectiveness.

The PVS Project Team is credited with working closely with Unisys, and the Los Angeles Eligibility Automated Determination Evaluation and Reporting (LEADER) System to fully automate and replace tens of thousands of hard copy paper abstracts coming in from the State of California each month.

The documents contained important payment information such as, unemployment benefits, disability insurance, and retirement survivors disability insurance benefits, all of which were needed by DPSS Eligibility Workers (EW) to determine a participant's eligibility.

With this new system in place, all of the PVS abstracts are now automatically loaded into LEADER and the EW is electronically notified that new income information has been received. The system also tracks the amount of time the abstract has been assigned to the EW, resulting in more timely LEADER updates.

As a result of this PVS, approximately \$10,000 per month in Internal Services Department printing charges, \$2,000 per month in clerical support time and \$150,000 per month in time spent by EWs manually entering the new income data into LEADER are saved by the department.

Tuition Reimbursement Program Reinstated for 2011-12

The Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources has announced the reinstatement of the employee Tuition Reimbursement Program (TRP) for 2011-12. The program offers an opportunity for all levels of staff to seek continuing education in order to enhance their job skills and performance.

Courses taken must have a direct relationship to the mission and function of the Department or be a requirement for completion of an associate of arts, bachelor of arts/science or master's degree program.

Tuition reimbursement is available to eligible full-time employees for courses taken at accredited colleges, universities, business, technical, and professional schools. TRP applications are processed by the DPSS Academy on a first-come-first-served basis until all available funds are exhausted. For more information about the TRP program or to obtain an application, contact Rosa Muro at RosaMuro@dpss.lacounty.gov (562-345-7770) or Nereida De La Cruz at NereidaDeLaCruz@dpss.lacounty.gov (562-345-7849).

Spotlight on DPSS' Charles W. Nasser: Why Persistence Pays Off

A self-admitted "wild teen" and high school dropout who was drafted into the U.S. Army at age 18, DPSS Human Services Administrator I, Charles Nasser, who is currently working in the GROW Section at Crossroads Campus, is solid proof that dreams are sometimes deferred, but persistence always pays off.



Charles Nasser

His story is both personal and inspiring. Although he failed the second grade, because of his difficulty in reading and speaking in front of the other children, today Nasser uses his communication skills to train and motivate employees within the Department.

Following his tour of duty in the Army, a mature and more focused Nasser used his veterans' GI Bill benefits to complete his college education at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). Finding the UCSB psychology department to be a natural fit for him, Nasser pursued a degree in marriage and family counseling.

Nasser describes his experiences at UCSB as some of the best years of his life, expressing appreciation for the positive relationships he developed along the way. But of all his rewards, Nasser said he treasures the pride he saw in his mother's eyes when he graduated from college. In honor of his parents' contribution of unqualified love to his success, Nasser committed to funding a scholarship commemorating his parents.

Asked what was his motivation to pursue his higher education despite obstacles, Nasser stated: "The key is to understand who you are and accept the bad with the good. You have to believe in what you do, accept failure, and be convinced that next time you'll get it."

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"



DPSS Los Angeles County Stars Awards



CalFresh Awareness Press Conference



CalFresh Awareness Mon



2012 Annual BPP Retreat



California State Association of Counties Challenge Award Presented to IHSS Anti-Fraud Program



Construction of a product application during a d.s



th Proclamation Kick-off



DPSS Staff Provide Free Tax Preparation Services
for CalWORKs and CalFresh Participants



CalFresh Outreach at KJLH FM Taste of Soul



to market the YBN online
school project exercise



Los Angeles County Association of Black County
Administrators Black History Celebration

DPSS Launches Veterans Resource Webpage

The Department has launched a new Veterans Resource webpage to assist the growing number of veterans and their families in accessing information and government benefits, as well as community resources.

The site provides updated information on services and benefits for veterans throughout Los Angeles County, which can be accessed by clicking on the "Veterans Resource" link at the bottom of the DPSS homepage at <http://dpss.lacounty.gov>.

Visitors to the site will find a wealth of information, which will be of value to everyone. The webpage is part of DPSS' Strategic Plan Objective to bring local resources to a virtual one stop location, where visitors can access information on health, housing, legal services, employment, and other services for veterans and their families.

The webpage was created in collaboration with the DPSS Information Technology Division; L.A. County Commission for Public Social Services; Los Angeles Ad Hoc Veterans Committee; and representatives of the Veteran Advisory Commission.

Your Benefits Now (YBN)

Did you know that our participants can now check their benefits online? The Your Benefits Now (YBN) webpage allows participants to get their case information at the click of a button! YBN can help us reduce lobby traffic and call volume in the districts.

Through YBN, L.A. County residents can also apply for benefits online. This will allow us to reach out to more people that are in need of assistance.

DPSS will be rolling out a campaign to promote the Your Benefits Now website this summer. Stay tuned.



Customer Service Center Expansion Helping to Reduce Traffic at District Offices

The DPSS Customer Service Center (CSC) added its services to the East Valley District on March 30 and is expanding to a third CSC site at the Northridge District Office in May.

On January 16, 2007, DPSS implemented its first fully operational CSC to optimize and enhance the quality of customer service, improve timeliness of case actions and service delivery, and increase telephone access.

The CSC helps reduce the number of district office visits for participants seeking assistance. Shifting the workload from the district offices enables the department to provide more effective and caring services to Los Angeles County residents.



Customer Service Center

The CSC is a single point of contact providing services for the CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and General Relief programs. Participants have access to an experienced Eligibility Worker Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

In addition, participants have access to the 24/7 Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system for case-specific and general information.

The CSC currently supports twelve district offices, serving over 500,000 cases. Further, the IVR system became available to all district offices in April 2011, and was enhanced in June 2011 to promote "self-service" and simplify easier access to case information. By the fall of 2013, all district offices will be supported by the CSC.

Why Drinking Plenty of Water is Important

You may have been told over and over that water is good for you; and that you should drink six to eight glasses a day. You may need more depending on your size, activity level and the weather.

Drinking plenty of water has tremendous health benefits. It can help us lose weight, relieve headaches and backaches due to dehydration, regulate our body temperature, have healthier skin, be more alert, keep joints and muscles lubricated, relieve fatigue and detoxify the body. Since 2/3 of the body is water, it is important to replenish your body by drinking more water especially when you are working out.

If your body does not get enough water, you may suffer from dehydration that may have harmful effects on your health. Lack of

enough water can cause tiredness, migraines, constipation, muscle cramps, irregular blood pressure, and kidney problems. If you have dark urine, dry skin, thirst, hunger and fatigue, these may be indications that you are not drinking enough water.

Warmer weather is here and it is time to make sure we are drinking plenty of water to help us stay healthy and active!



Nichelle Meadows, Medi-Cal Outreach District

2012 LA Marathon Athletes



2012 LA Marathon Athletes, pictured Bottom row L to R: Alma Mercado, William Perez, Marjorie Ancla, Blanca M. Ponce, Amelia Ramirez, Carlos Rodriguez, Middle row L to R: Rosalba Vera, Lois McNicoll, Maricela Aguayo, Mona Mojica, Anthony Truong, Back row L to R: Alberto Mejia-Amaya, Phil Ansell, Sheryl L. Spiller, Jerry Ortega and Peter Tinoco

Stretching: Focus on Flexibility

Stretching may take a back seat to your exercise routine. Although studies about the benefits of stretching are mixed, stretching may help improve flexibility, which in turn may improve athletic performance and decrease risk of injury.

The main benefits of stretching are thought to be improving athletic performance and decreasing the risk of activity-based injuries. Stretching will also help in physical activities and decrease risk of injuries by helping the joints move through their full range of motion.

For example, if an Achilles tendon is tight it lacks flexibility. If you do a lot of hill walking, your foot may not move through its full range of motion. Over time, this can increase your risk of tendinitis. Stretching your Achilles, however, may improve the range of motion in your ankle. This, in turn, can decrease the risk of microtrauma to your tendon that can lead to overload and injury.

Stretching also increases blood flow to the muscle. You may enjoy the ritual of stretching before and/or after hitting the trail, ballet floor or soccer field.



El Monte District Wellness Program

The Health Benefits of Yoga

Yoga has been practiced for more than 5,000 years, and currently, close to 11 million Americans are enjoying its health benefits.

Most Westernized yoga classes focus on learning physical poses, which are called asanas. They also usually include some form of breathing technique and possibly a meditation technique as well.

Some yoga classes are designed purely for relaxation. But there are styles of yoga that teach you how to move your body in new ways. Choosing one of these styles offers the greatest health benefits by enabling you to develop your flexibility, strength, and balance.

PROMOTIONS AND RETIREMENTS

PROMOTIONS

DECEMBER 2011

Walter Abad
Andranik Aghasaryan
Aracely Ahumada
Goharik Amirkhanyan
Yuri Arteaga
Jocelyn Artiaga
Miriam Ayub
Maria Cabrerros
Sarah Chung
Cecilia M. Cortez
Keith Dang
Benjamin Fimbres
Ann-Marie Flores
Elizabeth Garaicoa
Diana Grigorian
Silvana Grigorian
Manuel Hernandez
Juana Isaais
Sheila Jarcia
Anahit Kecheyan
Monica Lopez
Ramella Mehrabian
Yolanda Mendez
Alma Mercado
Bryan Nguyen
Carlos Nunez
Aileen Nunez Castillo
Alejandro Ortega
Marieta Perez
Zhanet Pogozyan
Evelyn Valdez
Yvette Yaghoubian
Mariam Zakaryan

JANUARY 2012

Elizabeth Alatorre
Gail Araujo
Leticia Chavez
Fred Chen
Maral Deirmenjian
Martha Diaz
Melissa Garcia
Jessica Kosterlytzky
Jacqueline Larios
Enedelia Ornelas
Kenyatta Ortega
Ramon Rangel
Azucena Silva

FEBRUARY 2012

Jessica Alvarez
Imelda Baga
Leslie Caceres
William Campbell
Rafaela Cardenas
Laura Carmouche
Veronica Carrillo
Cynthia Ceja
Anna Chebishian

FEBRUARY CONT.

Julie Clayton
Estanislao David
Lorik Davidian
Leonor Del Razo
Alfred Espinoza
Araceli Flores
Maria Flores
Monica Flores
Arush Gavadian
Maribel Gonzalez
Zaruhi Hannesyan
Lee S. Harris
Norma Jasso
Shenika Jubert
Wanda Knoles
Qiwen Liu
Marlen Lopez
Terri Love
Ying Lu
Sosi Margarian
Margarita Masouris
Mary Maxwell
Jacqueline McGiffert
Susanna Mukelyan
Narine Muradian
Juana Navarro
Victor Nunez
Mary Obregon
Soo Osborn
Maria Pimentel
Michael Preston
Edgar E. Ramirez
Miriam Ramirez
Nestor Requeno
Esperanza Sanchez
Goeth Sanchez
Blanca Sandoval
Michelle Sarabia
Wendy Taylor
Emma Tofalyan
Marsha Webster
Philicea Wilson
Chia-Tsung Yu
Hector Zamora
Melissa Zapata

MARCH 2012

Susan Chien
Arnetta Counts
Mortaza Davoudi
Sandra Frazier
Tamala McMorris
Thomas McVay
Jose Navarro
Vanessa Powers
Fionn Sanders
Annie Tran
Tara Walker

RETIREMENTS

JANUARY 2012

Dorris Bearden
Manalou Brinkley
Socorro Carrion
Betty Coleman
Clotilda Cua
Cynthia Dobrovodsky
Prema Doraiswamy
Alvonia Fonteno
Romeo Galdones
Ralph Godoy
Jerry Hobbs
Diana Holland
James Jenkins
Brenda Lewis
Patricia Macdonnell
Mineo Miyagishima
Salah El Nahass
Lily Ngo
Aida Prieto
Madeline Reynolds
Maria Rivera
Jay Slevin
Rosalina Tamayo
Gwendolyn Thompson
Chat Tran
Shirley Williams
Jorge Yamzon

FEBRUARY 2012

Dee Au
Felicitas Chavez
Althea Chen
Colleen Cunningham
Nicholas Hernandez
Judith Lillard
Mary Nelson
Shan-Ru Huang
Chin Sung
Karen Willis

MARCH 2012

Glen Alapeg
Frank Bravo
Walter Chan
Jose Chavez
Gloria Davis
Joyce Garner
Zoraida Hernandez
Lili Martinez
Alyce Molo
Sandra Pickering
Joseph Pham
Michael Schidlowski
Keat Yin
Gloria Young



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